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NEWARK, N. J.

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By Edward Wasgate Markens, M.D.,
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About every phase of Abraham Lincoln's life having been recorded it may be well to tell of his relations with the medical profession, much of which dates from a very early period. The first mention of doctors in any of his biographies is the statement that in the primitive region of Indiana where he lost his mother when he was eight years old, none lived within thirty-five miles of his home; from which fact we may assume that in the more barbarous region of Kentucky where he first saw the light none attended his birth. The death of Lincoln's mother of a disease called "Milk Sickness," with its fearful ravages not only of human beings but cattle, sheep and horses also, is made much of by all writers. According to the statement of an eminent physician of Illinois, Dr. Theo. Lemon, made many years ago the disease had a vegetable origin with possible fatal termination in sixty hours or prolongation for fourteen days.

Of other incidents of Lincoln's early days may be mentioned that he worked as pilot through the Illinois river for a Dr. Nelson and was a close friend of Dr. Burleigh. He was very intimate with Drs. Thomas Conant and A. G. Henry. One of the witnesses of his parent's marriage was Dr. Christohper Columbus Graham, who thus sets at rest the question of his alleged illegitimate birth.

Disregarding chronological order of narration, he one day is found with his friend, Dr. A. W. French of Springfield, taking a course of lessons in German from a German professor who came along, but soon gave it up, on finding he was not an apt scholar.

Lincoln's favorite poem, "Immortality," with the opening lines, "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" was first drawn to his attention by a friend, Dr. Jason Duncan. Another favorite poem was that of Dr. Oilver Wendell Holmes, called "The Last Leaf." When after the loss of his first love, Anne Rutledge, he fell a prey to melancholy and feared self destruction, he wrote for advice to a celebrated physician of Cincinnati, Dr. Drake, who declined to treat him without seeing him. It was Dr. Merryman, a Springfield friend, who acted as his second when challenged to a duel with General Shields, which never came off.

It is an interesting fact that Lincoln's

brother-in-law, Dr. George Todd, a Kentuckian who served as surgeon in the Confederate Army, was a brother of Mrs. Lincoln, and he had also a brother-in-law, Dr. William Wallace, husband of a sister of Mrs. Lincoln, for whom his son "Willie," who died in the White House, was named; and who accompanied him on a trip to Washington in 1861.

Lincolr took up closely when President, with one Isachar Zacharie, whom he addressed as "Doctor," and to whom he gave an autographic testimonial for successful treatment of his feet. What was back of the close intimacy established between the two has been much discussed but never revealed. Lincoln one day greeted individually some five thousand wounded soldiers in the hospital at City Point, under guidance of Surgeon McDonough. Shortly after he became President he took a humorous fling at the profession when called upon by Rufus Small, a well-known insurance expert, who tried to induce him to take out a policy on his life; but he declined, saying he was not yet ready to sell his bones to a physician.

One of his personal and political friends was Dr. Franklin Blades, of high standing in the profession in Springfield. Having abandoned the practice of medicine, taking up law and being admitted to the bar, unknown to Lincoln, he

wrote to him requesting the use of his name on his professional card as a lawyer. Being in doubt as to his identity. Lincoln answered, "I do not know if you are Dr. Blades or not. If you are Dr. Blades, you may use my name; if you are not Dr. Blades, if Dr. Blades says you may use my name, you may do so."

The President was a frequent visitor to army hospitals during the war. At City Point one day he was conducted by the medical director from cot to cot and gretted several thousand wounded soldiers with words of comfort for each. The late Dr. Alan McLane Hamilton told of his paying a visit to Lincoln and being impressed by his appearance of "far off dreaminess and introspection such as he had witnessed in peculiar or psychopathic people."

Coming down to the chapter of the assasinition and attending circumstances the name of Surgeon General J. K. Barnes, as a matter of course is prominent; it was Barnes and Dr. T. S. Verdi, a Washington physician who attended Secretary Seward and others of the Seward household when stabbed by Payne the night the President was shot. At the trial of Payne, Barnes, was also called to rebut the effort to clear him on the ground of insanity; as were Drs. James C. Hall, Surgeon Basil Norris, Asst. Surgeon George L. Porter, all of whom declared Payne sane and responsible for his

actions. Dr. Hall's concurrence was brought out only after his appearing for the defense and expressing belief of reasonable ground for suspicion of insanity based mainly on the prisoner's exhibition of utter insensibility after a long and thorough examination by him, physical and mental. Called as an expert, Dr. Charles H. Nichols, Superintendent of a Government Hospital for the insane at Washington, ojected to the scores of hypothetical questions hurled at him by Payne's Counsel on the ground that he had no opinions in respect to such questions and therefore was allowed to leave the stand. The testimony of Drs. Charles W. Davis and Samuel A. H. McKim, indicating low order of intellect and no sense of responsibility, moral or otherwise, failed to save Harold, the twenty year old companion of Booth from the scaffold.

The exact facts as to medical treatment of the President immediately after the shooting is a matter of dispute. Dr. Charles A. Leale then of the military hospital in Washington, "and still living," was there in civilian clothes. He is credited in the official records of the government with instant response to the call for a physician. According to his statement, he took charge at the request of Mrs. Lincoln, sent for brandy, removed a clot of blood from the wound, tried artificial respiration, and breathed hard

into the President's mouth. Heart action improved, but shortly after he announced the wound as mortal. Again he administered brandy and water, being meanwhile joined by Drs. Charles Sabin Taft, another army surgeon in uniform, who with others helped carry the President across the street. What followed was complete examination by him of the body, head to feet, application of hot water bottles, hot blankets, a long sonapism applied to the solar-plexus, and he sent for a long Nelaton probe. He opposed the suggestion of Taft and other doctors to administer more brandy, but Taft had his way and laryngeal obstruction resulted as Leale anticipated.

Dr. Taft asserts he was the first to respond to the call for a surgeon in the theatre, claims credit for much of the treatment described by Leale as his, and declares that he was there all through the night and felt the last throb as the President passed away; contrary to the statement of others that he was then absent. Parenthetically it may be said that his widow offered to sell to the father of the writer of this article a pair of Lincoln's cuff buttons and her son offered to sell a lock of Lincoln's hair, acquired by her husband after the President died

The physician in supreme command in the house where the President lay, until the arrival of Dr. Barnes about midnight

was most probably Dr. Robert King Stone, family physician of Lincoln, for whom Mrs. Lincoln sent immediately after the shooting and reached there, so he testified at the trial of the conspirators, within fifteen minutes. His examination of the President disclosed a gunshot wound in the left side of his head into which he carried his finger and he at once announced the case as hopeless. Previous to the embalment, he with others, made an examination and traced the wound through the brain, the ball being found in the anterior part of the same side of the brain, the left side. It was a large leaden hand-made ball, resembling those that are shot from the pistol known as the Derringer, larger than those used in the ordinary pocket revolvers. The ball was flattened somewhat in its passage through the skull, and a portion had been cut off in going through the bone. Dr. Stone marked the ball "A. L.," the initials of the President, and in the presence of the Secretary of War, in his office, enclosed it in an envelope, sealed it with his private seal and endorsed it with his name. The Secretary enclosed it in another envelope, which he endorsed in like manner and sealed it with his private seal. It was left in his custody and he ordered it to be placed among the archives of his department.

The identity of all the medical men at the bedside of the President where he

lay for nine hours before his death can never be determined, for the reason that nearly every doctor then in the city of Washington (according to the information of Dr. C. S. Lamb at that time a resident, but then not at home), was in the room at some time during the night. Dr. Leale states that many unknown to him were allowed to feel the pulse but none of them touched the wound. Provost-Marshall General James O'Brierne, officially present from the beginning, avers that he found there on his arrival, Dr. Charles H. Lieberman, a prominent Washington doctor, Russian by birth, attending the President, and was by him excitedly and vehemently directed to get some brandy, which being procured, the doctor poured down the President's throat, while he assisted in holding his head. The room in which Lincoln lay all night measured but ten by fifteen feet. This alone should dispose of many who pretend to have been there at the last moment, which according to some paintings of the scene number as many as forty-seven.

Life imprisonment at hard-labor was the penalty demanded of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd for his acquaintance with Booth and setting his broken leg at his Maryland home twenty-five miles from Washington, where he stopped with Herold for ten hours after shooting Lincoln. Mudd asserted that he had harbored

Booth unaware of his identity. It was brought out at his trial that he had before met him. The Judge Advocate contended he was as certainly in the conspiracy as were the two men whom he sheltered. The fact that he was a peaceable, kind, upright and obedient citizen, a man of culture, graduate of a Maryland college of medicine, large land owner and very highly respected, availed nothing. President Johnson ordered his release after four years' imprisonment at a government post in Florida, where he earned high praise by his exemplary conduct and valuable professional services during an epidemic of yellow fever. Returning home, he resumed practice of medicine.

At the autopsy held at the White House a few hours after death (as written out by Dr. Edward Curtis) were himself, Barnes, Crane, Stone, Woodward and Notson. They removed the entire brain before finding the bullet, which when lifted by Curtis slipped through his fingers and fell into an empty basin, with a clatter. The weighing gave only approximate results because of the loss of some brain substance caused by the wound; but it indicated weight not above the ordinary. The general physique was remarkable, says Dr. Curtis, he being simply astonished at the well-rounded muscles built upon strong bones of the powerful athlete. Dr. Leale also testifies to the fact that the President was

without a single physical defect of any kind. The one piece of statuary which reminds him of Lincoln, especially the lower part of the body, is the Moses of Michael Angelo, The Borglum in Newark, New Jersey, he considers a good one.

An interesting incident of Surratt's trial was the testimony of Dr. Lewis J. A. McMillen, surgeon of the steamer on which Surratt escaped to Liverpool from Quebec and to whom he revealed during the voyage, his identity and part in the conspiracy. Stirred by the offensive method of cross-examination by Surratt's counsel when on the stand, he openly denounced him as a sneak and coward. It may also be mentioned that Dr. Luke Blackburn of Mississippi, Dr. M. A. Pallen and Dr. J. B. Merritt, both of Canada, gave testimony looking to the implication of Southern leaders in a plot to burn, or introduce smallpox and yellow fever in Northern cities.

The oft-repeated stories of Booth's escape and living for many years after Lincoln's death has long since been disposed of by Dr. Frederick May, who identified the body, he having removed a tumor years before from Booth's neck. Also by Dr. Barnes who cut out a section of the vertebrae through which Corbett's bullet passed, which is now in the National Museum. At the burial of Booth in Baltimore in 1869, a brother,

Dr. Joseph A. Booth, was present, also Dr. J. R. W. Dubbar of Baltimore who had examined the body of Gearge Washington when removed and placed at the present tomb at Mt. Vernon.